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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: RESPONSE TO NARCOTICS AND CHEMICAL  
CONTROL SECTIONS OF 2006-2007 INSCR

**¶1.** (U) Following is the submission from U.S. Office in Pristina for the narcotics and chemical control sections of this year's INSCR report.

**¶2.** (U) Summary. Kosovo is primarily a transit point for heroin originating in Turkey and Afghanistan and destined for Western European countries, but it does have a small and growing domestic narcotics market. Kosovo faces serious challenges in its battle against narcotics trafficking. Its borders are porous, there is potential for corruption among its poorly-paid and poorly-equipped Border Police and Customs officers, and its unique status under UNSCR 1244 as a United Nations-administered territory prevents it from entering into most bilateral, multilateral and international agreements, including the 1988 UN Drug Convention. Kosovo's final status is expected to be determined in 2007, and the United States and the European Union intend to continue providing rule of law technical assistance, training and equipment donations, which will help Kosovo to more effectively counter narcotics trafficking.

#### Status of Narcotics in Kosovo

**¶3.** (U) Kosovo is a transit point for heroin originating in Turkey and, to a lesser extent, Afghanistan and destined for Western European markets. Narcotics traffickers capitalize on weak border control in Kosovo. The Kosovo Border Police is a young service, lacks basic equipment, and does not have a mandate to patrol the green border (areas where there are no official, manned border or administrative boundary line gates). NATO's KFOR has roving teams that patrol the green border, but traffickers easily take advantage of numerous passable roads leading into Kosovo that lack border or administrative boundary line gates. Border Police and Customs agents are also poorly-paid, and thus susceptible to corruption. Kosovo officials are attempting to tackle the problem, but United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) officials believe some officers allow narcotics shipments to pass through the unmanned border and administrative boundary gates.

**¶4.** (U) Kosovo is not a significant narcotics producer, but

Kosovo police have found cases of small-scale marijuana cultivation in back yards and uncultivated marijuana plants growing in rural areas. There have been no reports of chemical seizures in Kosovo, and Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and UNMIK officials do not believe laboratories are a problem.

**¶15. (U)** Information on domestic narcotics consumption is not systematically gathered, but PISG and UNMIK officials agree that there is a growing local market and that illegal drug use is on the rise. The Ministry of Health believes levels of narcotics consumption among teenagers and university-aged young adults, the primary users, are comparable to those in most Western European countries. Drugs of all types, including heroin, are reportedly available in Kosovo. Marijuana cases increased in 2006, but the vast majority of addicts referred for treatment were heroin users.

#### Kosovo Actions Against Drugs in 2006

**¶16. (U)** Policy Initiatives. The Government of Kosovo is just beginning to address the narcotics problem, and there is no national counternarcotics strategy. The Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and Ministry of Health, however, reported that they are advocating for creation of an inter-ministerial committee or working group, coordinated through the Office of the Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister, to draft such a plan.

**¶17. (U)** With an eye toward eventual EU accession, Kosovo sent a representative from the Ministry of Health to an EU conference on "Tackling the Drug Problem in the Western Balkans" in September 2006, and determined a number of priorities for action based on the EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012. The priorities include evaluation of the current

PRISTINA 00001057 002 OF 004

situation, definition of a counternarcotics strategy and action plan, and creation of implementation structures such as inter-ministerial working groups. Due to the Kosovo budget cycle and the fact that those priorities were identified late in the year, officials say little action can be expected before 2008.

**¶18. (U)** Law Enforcement Efforts. The counternarcotics competency was transitioned from UNMIK to KPS in May 2006, and narcotics-related arrests have reportedly increased since the KPS took control. From January to late-November 2006, the KPS arrested 328 people on narcotics charges and filed 259 narcotics-related cases. In the same period, they confiscated 13.5 kilos of heroin, 148 kilos of cocaine, 400 kilos of hashish, 27 kilos of processed marijuana, and 24 kilos of marijuana plants.

**¶19. (U)** KPS counternarcotics officers face many challenges. They lack basic equipment and resources, and undercover operations are complicated by the fact that they can only monitor mobile telephones on the Vala 900 network. The Serb-controlled Mobtel mobile telephones and land lines are beyond their reach. Kosovo's small size also hampers undercover work because communities are tight-knit and everyone knows who is working on counternarcotics. The KPS also noted a decline in effectiveness after it decentralized the counternarcotics division in 2005. It will return to a centralized system in 2007.

**¶10. (U)** Illicit Cultivation. Kosovo is not a significant narcotics producer, but the KPS has found some evidence of small-scale marijuana cultivation. There were six cases of marijuana cultivation in 2006. Three cases involved uncultivated marijuana plants, while the other three each involved about 20 plants found in back yards. There have been no reports of chemical seizures in Kosovo, and PISG and UNMIK officials do not believe labs are a problem.

**¶11. (U)** Corruption. There have been no arrests or

indications of high-level narcotics-related corruption in Kosovo. There are reports of corruption among border police and Customs officers, but the KPS and UNMIK Customs Service say they are attempting to address it. Cases reportedly tend to involve officers turning a blind eye to narcotics trafficking or accepting bribes to allow narcotics to get through border or administrative boundary gates. KPS officials see the potential for problems due to the officers' low salaries and lack of benefits. They believe corruption exists in the regional counter-narcotics offices.

**¶12. (U) Agreements and Treaties.** Due to its unique status as a UN-administered province of Serbia, Kosovo is not a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention or any other international conventions or protocols. Its constitutional framework, however, calls on it to respect the principles of UN conventions.

**¶13. (U)** Kosovo is unable to enter into most binding bilateral or multilateral agreements, but it does cooperate and exchange information with countries in the region. The Minister of Internal Affairs attended a Balkan ministerial on combating organized crime, including narcotics, in Turkey in 2006, which resulted in an oral declaration that participants would cooperate more closely. Also in 2006, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs met with his counterpart in Tirana to discuss stronger cooperation on combating organized crime. Finally, KPS officials reported that a regional coordination group to include Kosovo, the states of the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova, will be launched in June 2007.

**¶14. (U) Drug Flow/Transit.** Kosovo is reportedly a transit point for heroin from Turkey and Afghanistan, most of which is destined for Western European countries, including Switzerland, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, and Sweden. Kosovars regularly travel to these countries to visit relatives living in them, and UNMIK and KPS officials

PRISTINA 00001057 003 OF 004

believe much of the drug trade is managed through family/clan networks. Most drugs allegedly enter Kosovo overland from neighboring countries. Officials believe one major route is from Turkey, through Bulgaria and Macedonia, and another is from Turkey, through Bulgaria and Serbia. There are reports of collaborative arrangements between Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian criminal groups for drug trafficking. Anecdotal evidence suggests the drugs are broken down into smaller quantities in Kosovo before heading to Western Europe. UNMIK officials report a lot of small movements of narcotics, such as two to five kilos on one person or 10 to 20 kilos in a bag on a bus. The major transit points are Gjilan, Prizren and Mitrovica.

**¶15. (U) Domestic Programs.** Kosovo lacks an overall policy for dealing with existing and potential narcotics-related problems, but the PISG is increasingly aware of the dangers of narcotics. The Ministries of Health and Education run some domestic prevention programs, and community police officers visit schools throughout Kosovo to educate students about the risks associated with drug use. Non-governmental organizations assist with some of these efforts.

**¶16. (U)** There are no reliable estimates for the number of drug addicts in Kosovo. Drug treatment is provided by the Pristina University Hospital Psychiatry Department, but only one doctor and one nurse are devoted to treating drug addicts, and there are no structured drug treatment programs. Methadone is not prescribed because the law does not permit it. Some addicts reportedly receive anti-anxiety medication or anti-depressants to relieve withdrawal symptoms, while the most severe, agitated patients receive anti-psychotics. The Pristina University Hospital Psychiatry Department says that, on average, three to four people are in in-patient treatment at any given time, and the overwhelming majority of them are heroin addicts. The number of addicts receiving out-patient

treatment is reportedly much higher, but the hospital declines to give a figure. Other regional medical centers' psychiatry wards reportedly do what they can to assist drug addicts, but they do not devote staff to their treatment.

¶17. (U) The Pristina University Hospital Psychiatry Department notes that the number of patients is increasing and it sees an urgent need for a genuine drug treatment program, which has more and better-trained staff, offers individual and group therapy, and is separate from the psychiatric ward. It has developed a two-year strategic plan, including these goals, but its enactment depends on the Ministry of Health's approval and funding. The hospital considers construction of a separate drug treatment facility a priority because they believe only the most severe cases ever reach them due to a dual stigma of patients being labeled drug addicts and erroneously viewed as mentally ill after seeking treatment in the psychiatric ward.

#### U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

¶18. (U) Bilateral Cooperation. Kosovo cooperates with the United States on counternarcotics issues to the extent possible, but Kosovo's unique political status hampers bilateral cooperation. Kosovo cannot legally enter into most bilateral, multilateral or international agreements, including extradition treaties, until its final status is resolved.

¶19. (U) In past years, the United States Government has trained prosecutors and police on techniques to combat organized crime, including narcotics trafficking. It has also provided technical assistance and equipment donations that directly or indirectly support counternarcotics work in Kosovo. The United States Government also funds and contributes the largest contingent of police officers (over 200) in the UN Mission in Kosovo, including monitors and mentors of KPS officers working on counter-narcotics efforts.

¶20. (U) The Road Ahead. Kosovo's final status is expected to be resolved in 2007, and the United States will continue to

PRISTINA 00001057 004 OF 004

provide rule of law assistance to Kosovo throughout the transition period. The EU is planning a rule of law mission under the auspices of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), which will take over from UNMIK. The U.S. is coordinating its rule of law assistance goals and priorities for Kosovo with the EU, and will continue to provide training, technical assistance and equipment, which directly or indirectly supports counternarcotics work, to the KPS and Kosovo's criminal justice sector. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Justice will conduct extensive training for prosecutors in the new Kosovo Special Prosecutors Office, which will handle narcotics trafficking and other sensitive crimes. The U.S. will also continue to contribute police officers to the civilian police mission in Kosovo.  
KAIDANOW